

Henry Whitehead Place  
Great Smoky Mountains National Park  
Cades Cove Vicinity  
Blount County  
Tennessee

HABS TN-161

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Addendum to  
Henry Whitehead Place  
(Great Smoky Mountains National Park)  
Cades Cove Vicinity  
Blount County  
Tennessee

HABS No. TN-161

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Addendum to  
HENRY WHITEHEAD PLACE  
Great Smoky Mountains National Park  
Cades Cove  
Blount County  
Tennessee

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Owner -

U. S. Government, National Park Service

Date of Erection -

Back Cabin 1881 (local tradition)

Front Cabin 1895-1898

H.C. Wilburn, C.S. Grossman and A. Stupka

Report on the Proposed Mountain Culture Program for the  
Great Smoky Mountains National Park - typescript -  
28 June 1938 .

Architect -

Builder -

Of back cabin - David Shields

Of front cabin - Henry Whitehead

Materials -

Back cabin - Roughly hewn logs with saddle-notched joints.

Front cabin - Sash-sawn timbers from the heart of white  
pine logs with dovetail joints.

Present Condition -

The cabin was restored in 1937 by C.S. Grossman. Further repairs  
were made in 1948 by the National Park Service.

References -

Wilburn, Grossman and Stupka - op. cit.

Cades Cove Leaflet.

Buildings File, Park Headquarters

Horace Kephart MS. Notebooks

Photographs

Campbell, John C. - The Southern Highlander and His Homeland.

Russell Sage Foundation, N. Y. 1921.

Murfree, Mary Noailles, The Prophet of the Great Smoky Mountains, Boston  
Houghton Mifflin, 1885,

Ross, Marion Dean - The Henry Whitehead Place, Cades Cove, Great Smoky Mountains National Park - An Architectural Survey Report prepared August 1957. typescript in Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction, National Park Service, 120 South 3rd Street, Philadelphia 6, Pa.

Architectural Description -

Layout - Two approximately square cabins, the larger with a porch on front and back.

Over-all dimensions -

Old cabin 15'2" x 14'9" (int. dimensions), connecting porch 6'10-3/8" x 20'7-1/2"

New cabin 17'-1/4" x 19' 9-1/2" (int. dimensions)

Porch on front of New Cabin 5' 1-1/2" x 20' 7-1/2"

Construction -

Foundations: piles of local stones and earth

Old Cabin: Built of roughly hewn logs, the hewing on the sides probably being done after they were laid up in the walls. As the wall was laid up, the lower log was "shouldered" at the corners and the next upper log "saddled" to fit on top. Wide spaces were left between the logs, which were filled with 1/2 inch chinking boards on each side, making the average thickness of the wall 9 inches. Most vertical measurements are out of plumb. The chimney was built of field stone laid in mud mortar. It was repaired in 1948. Both gable ends are covered with clapboards above the log wall.

The roof of the cabin is made of rived oak shakes laid shingle fashion, 24 inches long and 8 inches to the weather.

New or Front Cabin - Built of sawn log construction resting on low dry stone piers at each corner. The logs are carefully dovetailed with a half-butterfly notch to allow drainage at each joint. The vertical joints in the notches are cut with a saw. The joints are generally tight without chinking. According to Mr. Grossman, the walls were built to their full height before the openings were cut.

The chimney in the center of the southwest wall is built of hand-molded brick fired on the place. At the ground, the chimney measures 2'2" x 4'10".

Cost - Not known

Elevations -

The front of the newer cabin faces northwest. The porch in front was restored by Charles Grossman in 1937. There is a batten door off center to the right. There is a break between the shingles of the roof and the shingles of the porch. The height of the new cabin is about 20 ft. to the ridge of the roof.

The northwest elevation of the old cabin also has a batten door, more nearly in the center. The height to the ridge is 13'2-1/2".

The southwest elevation shows most sharply the contrast between the earlier hand-hewn cabin and the later sash-sawn cabin. On the top of the brick chimney, there is a high metal hood, which narrows toward the top.

In the newer cabin, there is one window to the left of the chimney. In the older cabin, there is a window on either side, the one to the left being only an 11" pane of glass which slides upward - originally an unglazed opening known as a "Granny Hole."

On the southeast elevation of the new cabin, there is also a batten door. On the southeast elevation of the old cabin, there is a wide, but low window 3'3-1/2" x 11".

Interior -

There is no basement in either cabin.

Ground floor - Old cabin only one room with the fireplace of local stone and clayey mortar. The arch of the fire opening was reinforced by two pieces of iron from a wagon tire 1-3/8" wide.

The new cabin has a loft over the main room, which is reached by narrow ladder stairs in the south corner of the room. The sash window has four panes. Over the brick fireplace, there is tongue and groove boarding up to a very high shelf. The fireplace lintel is of iron, size 5/8" x 2-3/8" x 34-1/2".

History -

The old cabin of 1881 was built by David Shields for his sister when she returned to Cades Cove as a widow with one child. The widow was courted by Henry Whitehead, who, in his efforts to persuade her to marry him, promised to build her the finest cabin in Cades Cove according to Mr. Grossman of the National Park Service, who has studied the log cabins of this region considerably. Henry Whitehead succeeded, and the new cabin is the "ultimate" in log construction. The logs were sash-sawn at the nearby Cable Mill. The cabin is about 16 by 18 feet, which is about the largest length of log which would be sawn at a sash-saw mill.

These cabins are on their original sites and have been repaired twice by the National Park Service, once in 1937 and again in 1948. In 1948, the National Park Service began marking and dating all replacements.

The hand-molded brick chimney was very unusual for the area and also gave a lot of prestige to the Henry Whitehead Cabin.

In the old cabin, there are remains of a warping frame hanging on pegs on the wall, on which are hanging fragments of a spool frame. The warping frame was used for measuring the warp and keeping it in order preparatory to setting up the loom. The spool frame was used separately and held yarn on cornhusk spindles, from which it was drawn to the warping frame.

March 4, 1958

Agnes A. Gilchrist  
HABS-EODC  
National Park Service  
April 3, 1958